

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, IN

SUBJECT: VISIT OF JOHN A BUSTERUD, MEMBER, COUNCIL ON ENVIRON-
MENTAL QUALITY (CEQ)

REF: STATE 13051, 782, 243084, NEW DELHI 14576, USIA 23182,
22942, 22638, MANILA 3188, NEW DELHI 13408, *USIA 21518

1. EMBASSY BRIEFING WITH SCIATT AND DYSCIATT SET FOR 9 AM JANUARY
31.

2. APPOINTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WITH OFFICIALS IN COUNCIL OF
SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR) AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE
ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION, MINISTRY OF AGRI-
CULTURE FOR JANUARY 31. DR. ASHOK KHOSLA, WHO IS KEY INDIAN
REPRESENTATIVE TO UNEP WILL NOT BE IN COUNTRY.

3. FEBRUARY 1, HAS BEEN SET ASIDE FOR VISIT TO AGRA FOR MR.
AND MRS. BUSTERUD.

4. RESERVATIONS FOR JANUARY 31- FEBRUARY 1 CONFIRMED AT ASHOKA
HOTEL.

5. EMBASSY TRANSPORT WILL MEET AT AIRPORT ON ARRIVAL.

6. THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF DELINEATION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN
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INDIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND POLICIES AND PRIORITY RESEARCH

AREAS:

1. PRIOR TO THE UN STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN JUNE 1972, INDAN HAD HIGH HOPES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF CONTROL AND FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON WORLD WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. A NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 1972 AND INAUGURATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN APRIL 1972 WITH BROAD GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING AND IMPROVING HUMAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTRY, AND TO ESTABLISH NEW POLICES AND PROGRAMS. DURING THIS PERIOD A NUMBER OF APPROACH PAPERS WERE PREPARED FOR THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE. A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION WAS SENT TO THE CONFERENCE, HEADED BY C. SUBRAMANIAN, THEN PLANNING MINISTER AS WELL AS MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ASSISTED BY KARAN SINGH, MINISTER FOR TOURISM (NOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH) AND I.K. GUJRAL, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE LATE PITAMBAR PANT WHO HAD BEEN NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION (NCEPC).

2. DURING THE PAST YEAR HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A DIMINISHING INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE GOI IN ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS. A PRIMARY CAUSE OF THIS DISINTEREST WAS THE TRAGIC DEATH OF PITAMBAR PANT LAST FEBRUARY. PANT WAS THE SPARKPLUG OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM AND ENJOYED THE CONFIDENCE AND TRUST OF THE PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS MANY HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT.

A NEW CHAIRMAN HAS NOT YET BEEN APPOINTED. ANOTHER CAUSE FOR THE PRESENT LACK OF INTEREST IS THAT THE ENORMOUS INFLATIONARY AND OTHER ECONOMIC PROBLEMS HAVE FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE AND CUT MANY NEW AND ONGOING PROGRAMS NOT CONSIDERED OF HIGH PRIORITY AND TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CUTS IN THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SAID "GROWTH FIRST POLLUTION LATER." ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS WE BELIEVE, HAVE SUFFERED MORE THAN MOST.

3. IN LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPEMENT, BOTH AIR POLLUTION AND WATER POLLUTION BILLS ARE BEING FRAMED BY THE PARLIAMENT. THE WATER BILL WAS TAKEN UP BY THE RAJYA SABHA DURING THIS WINTER SESSION AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PASSED.

THE AIR POLLUTION BILL WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO. THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATIONS ACT 1951, IS ALSO BEING AMENDED TO ENSURE THAT THE DISCHARGE OF EFFLUENTS AND CASES INTO AIR, WATER AND LAND DOES NOT EXCEED SAFETY LIMITS.

4. IN REGARD TO US-INDO COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS,

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTERS IN INDIA ARE EAGER TO COLLABORATE WITH THE US ON RESEARCH PROJECTS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND SCIENTISTS. SEVERAL SCIENTISTS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) HAVE VISITED INDIA DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE COOPERATION. A NUMBER OF JOINT ACTIVITIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN INITIATED SUCH AS THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND MICROFILM REPORTS FROM THE US ON DOCUMENTS RELATED TO POLLUTION CONTROL LAWS AND PERTINENT REPORTS FROM INDIA. THE MOST INTERESTING FIELD FOR JOINT RESEARCH EFFORTS SEEMS TO BE IN WATER RESEARCH AND GROUND WATER POLLUTION. THE PRIMARY INSTITUTE IN INDIA FOR COLLABORATION IN THIS FIELD IS CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NAGPUR.

5. THE INDIAN "SAVE THE TIGER" PROGRAM WAS INITIATED APRIL 1973 IN CORBETT PARK BUT HAS NOT PROGRESSED VERY FAR.SCHNEIDER

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